Manlius Boethius

(d. c. 487)

BRIEFING

Nar. Manlius Boethius (died *circa* 487) was a Roman and Italian aristocrat, who was appointed consul for 487. He was likely the father of the Roman philosopher, Boethius.

LIFE

He was probably the son of Boethius, the praetorian prefect of Italy, who was put to death by Emperor Valentinian III in 454, and probably the father of the famous philosopher Boethius; if this identification is correct, he died not long after 487, for Boethius is known to have been orphaned as a young boy and adopted by the aristocrat Quintus Aurelius Memmius Symmachus.

Boethius' career can be derived from a consular diptych preserved in Brescia. He was *praefectus urbi* of Rome (date unknown), then Praetorian prefect of Italy at some point between 480 and 487, when he was appointed consul (not recognised in the East), *praefectus urbi* for the second time and *patricius*.

This diptych records his second name abbreviated NAR. E. Weigand explained this abbreviation to mean *N(onius) AR(rius)*. Although Nonius is a common name under the early Empire, Alan Cameron has pointed out the combination "Nonius Arrius" has been attested only twice in the 300 years prior to Boethius. He further notes the abbreviation "N. Ar." is unattested except for this consular diptych. Based on these considerations, he believes this explanation is untenable, and proposes NAR should be read as an abbreviation for one of two names: either "Narius", "a securely if sparsely attested Italian name"; or as an engraving error for MAR, an abbreviation for "Marius", a far more common name.